



# GRASI

Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative



Eglin Air Force Base, Florida



## LANDSCAPE INITIATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DRAFT | ABR;>2014

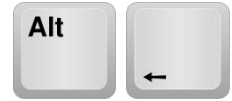
This printed volume contains the Executive Summary of the *Draft GRASI Landscape Initiative Environmental Impact Statement*, and the entire EIS and appendices on the CD in the pocket below.

Click on [hyperlinks](#) to jump to an element, and hold down the "Alt" key while pressing the "left-arrow" key to GO BACK.



View the EIS document and appendices on-screen in Adobe Acrobat® Reader (available for download at no cost from [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)). Insert the CD in your computer's CD drive and double-click on the file in the CD directory.

Scroll through the document or click on a heading in the Table of Contents, which will take you to that section of the EIS. Also, JUMP to a table, figure, or section by clicking on any "[hyperlink](#)" to it. Go BACK to the page you jumped from, by holding down the "Alt" key while pressing the "left-arrow" key on the keyboard.



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**Comments should be postmarked by June 23, 2014.**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

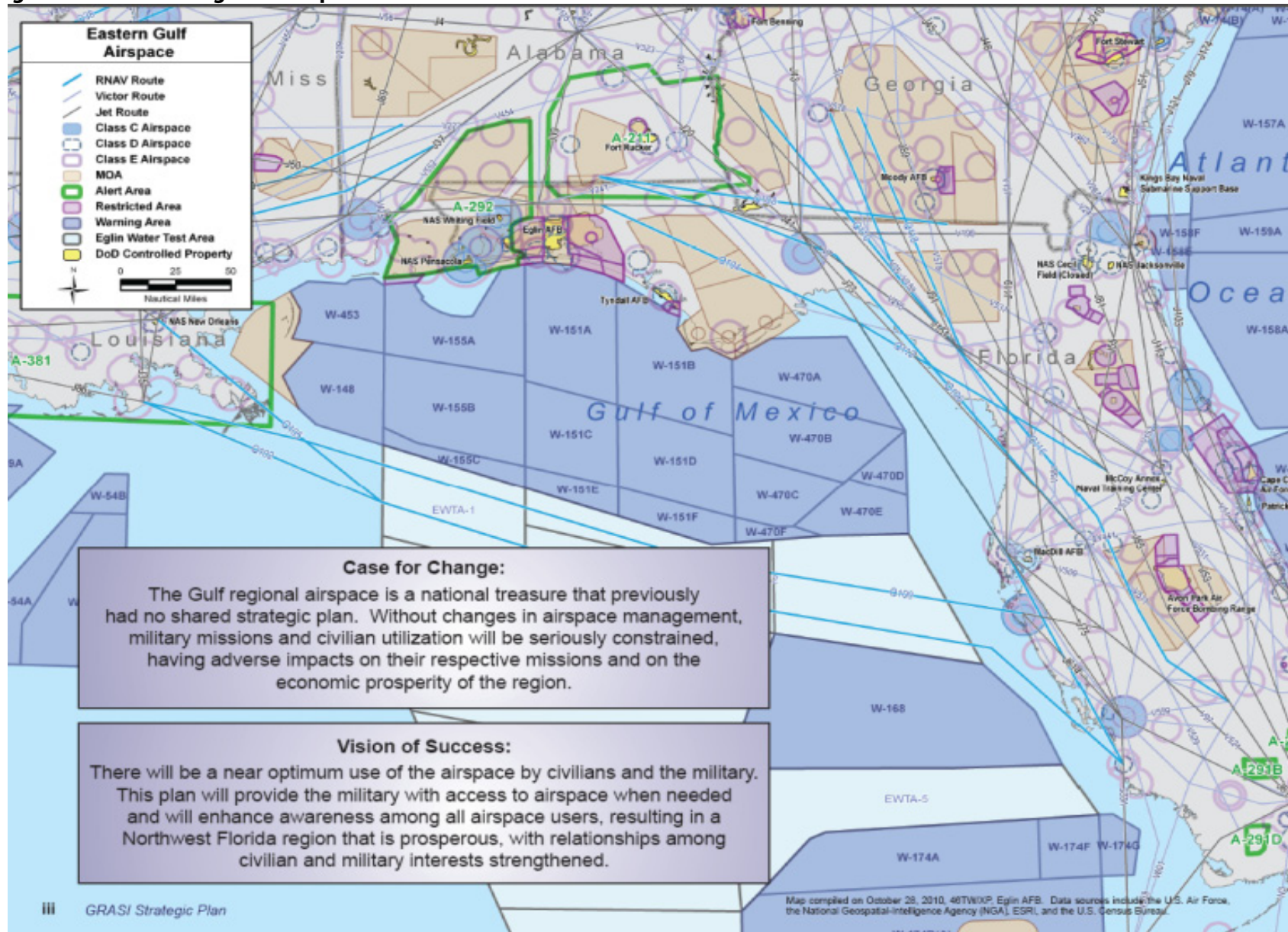
The Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) region (Figure ES-1) consists of the eastern Gulf of Mexico region, which includes northwest Florida, southern Mississippi, lower Alabama, southern Georgia, and the eastern Gulf of Mexico. The GRASI is a collaborative planning effort between military and civilian leaders designed to ensure the future availability and capacity of regional airspace and training lands for military use and the continued economic prosperity of the Gulf coast. The entire GRASI planning process, goals, objectives, and strategies are in the *GRASI Strategic Plan*, at <http://grasi.leidoseemg.com>.

This Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) examines the potential environmental impacts resulting from the implementation of the Proposed Action, which is the GRASI Landscape Initiative (GLI) in the region of northwest Florida. The GLI is a U.S. Air Force-led partnership with the State of Florida and federal agencies to expand the capacity of the region to safely host military test and training operations. Specifically, this EIS addresses locations in the Blackwater River State Forest (BRSF) and Tate's Hell State Forest (THSF) (Figure ES-2) for general training operations, as well as small, noncontiguous land areas throughout the region for permanent and mobile radar emitter sites.

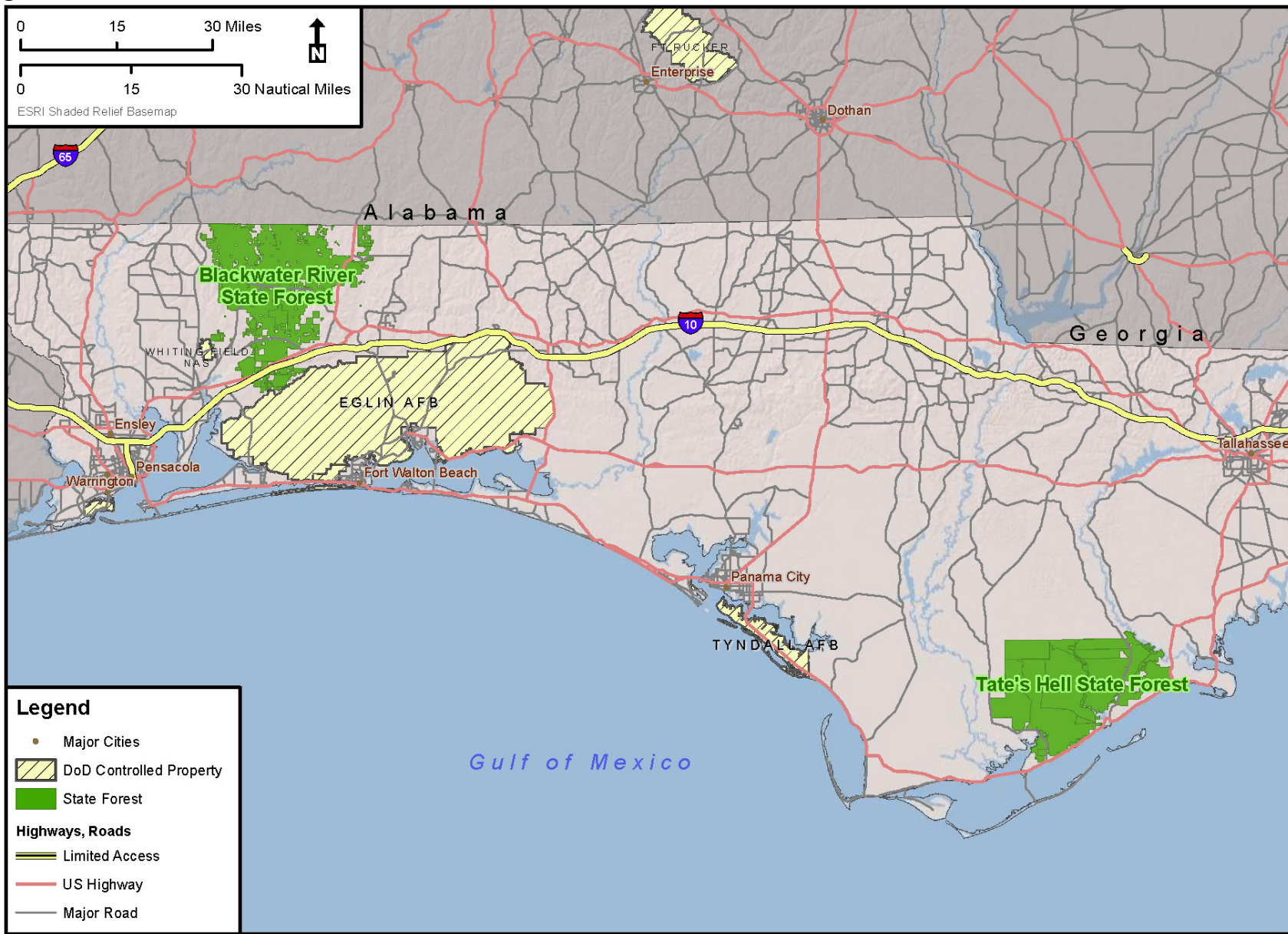
### ES.1. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS PROCESS (EIAP)

The proposed activities addressed within this document constitute a federal action and, therefore, must be assessed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA requires federal agencies to consider the environmental consequences of proposed actions in the decision-making process (42 United States Code [USC] 4321, et seq.). The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) was established under NEPA, 42 USC 4342, et seq., to implement and oversee federal policy in this process. In 1978, the CEQ issued regulations implementing the NEPA process under Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Parts 1500–1508. The Air Force EIAP for meeting CEQ requirements is accomplished via procedures set forth in CEQ regulations and 32 CFR Part 989. This EIS has been prepared in accordance with NEPA and 32 CFR Part 989.

Figure ES-1. GRASI Regional Airspace



**Figure ES-2. Location of Blackwater River and Tate's Hell State Forests**



## **ES.2. PURPOSE AND NEED**

### **ES.2.1 Purpose**

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to analyze the suitability of state lands already identified by state agencies, pursuant to memorandums of agreement under the *GRASI Strategic Plan*, as potentially available for conducting a variety of nonhazardous military training activities. The intent of the GLI is not to establish new, dedicated-use military ranges but rather to develop additional training flexibility and diversity potentially available through established partnerships and agreements for use when training flexibility at existing military bases is not available. The intent of the GLI, therefore, is to provide military units with compatible locations that can serve as an outlet for training activities when they are otherwise unable to meet their requirements using current military training areas.

Specifically, this Proposed Action (the GLI, a component of the GRASI) is designed to develop additional regional training flexibility for nonhazardous military operations. This would be accomplished through two types of partnerships. The Air Force would partner with the State of Florida to obtain permits to use lands that the state has already identified as potentially available for training: BRSF and THSF (Figure ES-2). In addition, the Air Force would partner with the Florida Forest Service (FFS) and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) for use of associated lands for placement of temporary and mobile training radar emitters.

### **ES.2.2 Need**

The Proposed Action is needed because there is a projected regional shortfall of military training and testing land and airspace in the GRASI region. The demand for the land range and use of restricted areas (RAs) over the Eglin Range Complex creates scheduling conflicts for nonhazardous training. Obtaining the necessary permits to use new areas for nonhazardous training and placing training emitters in remote locations would create flexibility, improving training outcomes through better scheduling and reducing the competing demands on RA. Eglin Air Force Base's (AFB's) primary mission is test and evaluation, and training activities sometimes have a lower priority.

These measures would allow some mission activities a place to operate when the airspace is already being used by other mission activities. Emitter sites create realistic threat scenarios for pilots and more realistic training scenarios by simulating an integrated air defense system (IADS), which helps with identifying and countering enemy missile or artillery threats from land or sea.

### 1 **ES.3. DECISION TO BE MADE**

2 For purposes of this EIS, the decision to be made is whether to implement the Proposed  
3 Action (create flexibility by obtaining necessary permits/leases to use emitter sites in  
4 northwest Florida and conduct training activities as another permitted user of BRSF and THSF)  
5 or the No Action Alternative. The decision to be made also includes how to implement  
6 elements of the Proposed Action and the frequency of training activities. Implementation of  
7 the No Action Alternative would mean continuing all current training activities at the Eglin  
8 Range Complex using training workarounds to try to meet units' training needs to the  
9 maximum extent possible. Using training workarounds are not anticipated to meet all unit  
10 training requirements, particularly as the GRASI region becomes subject to greater demands.

### 11 **ES.4. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES**

12 The Proposed Action consists of two main components: establishment and use of emitter  
13 training sites on GRASI partner lands and applying to the FFS and FWC to be a permitted user  
14 of the northwest Florida state forests for nonhazardous training activities. This Proposed  
15 Action may not provide the most comprehensive solution for all training needs, as described  
16 in Sections 2.1 and 2.2. Should other partnerships identify additional training locations, they  
17 will be considered in conjunction with the appropriate level of additional NEPA analysis. At  
18 this time, no other suitable training locations have been identified as potentially available for  
19 use and no other elements of the GLI proposal have adequate project definition to warrant  
20 inclusion in this EIS.

#### 21 **ES.4.1 Proposed Action**

##### 22 **ES.4.1.1 Emitter Sites**

23 A component of the Proposed Action is to establish up to 12 radar, telemetry, and emitter  
24 training sites throughout northwest Florida to support development of a simulated IADS to  
25 be used for air training. Radar and telemetry emitters are used for tracking aircraft and  
26 navigation; training emitters are radar simulator systems designed to help train military  
27 personnel to identify and counter enemy missile or artillery threats from land or sea. Types of  
28 emitters would vary depending on need, and their use would be determined by constraints  
29 associated with the site and respective operational parameters of the specific system. As an  
30 example, use of high-powered systems with large safety hazard distances may be restricted at  
31 sites in close proximity to populated areas.

32 Emitter training sites identified would utilize FFS and FWC lands via leasing agreements.  
33 These sites would accommodate mobile and temporary use; mobile use means that the site  
34 would be used for a day with operators on-site, while temporary use may last for several days.  
35 Proposed locations are shown in Figure ES-3. The majority of sites identified as part of the  
36 screening process are associated with FFS fire spotting towers, while two sites are owned by  
37 FWC and one site by Eglin AFB. All sites are either "improved" or "semi-improved." Not all  
38 proposed sites may be used, and only several at any one time would be operational.

### ES.4.1.2 Training Activities in Northwest Florida State Forests

Training activities associated with the Proposed Action consist of utilizing existing areas cleared by the FFS as part of regular forest management activities for helicopter landing and drop zones, use of existing airfields and roadways for aircraft landings, and a number of different land and air training activities. These activities currently occur in the areas between designated test/training sites on the Eglin Range. Specifically, two state forests in northwest Florida, BRSF and THSF, would be leased through agreements with FFS.

For the purposes of this EIS, each state forest has been divided into “tactical areas” (TAs), which correlate to each state forest recreational area as shown in Figures ES-4 and ES-5. Training activities may occur in any of the TAs, with consideration of restrictions identified via coordination with the FFS during the planning process, as well as any constraints or mitigations identified in this EIS. Training in the TAs would provide flexibility for those test/training units that are unable to schedule time on the Eglin Range or in the RA due to other higher-priority activities or range congestion.

All training activities in the state forests would be conducted per the requirements of Eglin AFB Instruction (EAFBI) 13-212, *Range Planning and Operations*, Chapter 7 – Environmental Management (December 2010, Interim Change on 9 September 2011), as applicable, and in accordance with the respective state forest management plans. EAFBI 13-212, Chapter 7, is available at <http://grasieis.leidoseemg.com/documentation.aspx>.

The following subsections summarize proposed training activities; more detailed information can be found in Section 2.3.2 of the GLI EIS. These activities would be carried out by units of Air Force Special Operations Command located at Hurlburt Field, units of the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) located at Eglin AFB, F-35 Joint Strike Fighter and support units, and other Department of Defense units.

Training activities described under the Proposed Action are not mutually exclusive, and some training activities would occur in support of other activities or subsequent to other training activities. An example would be a training mission involving several helicopters flying from Eglin AFB to a BRSF tactical area Helicopter Landing Zone/Drop Zone (HLZ/DZ) where personnel and equipment would be dropped via an Airdrop or a low-level insertion/extraction. Personnel may then conduct Cross-Country Dismounted Movement (CCDM) training to hardened camp site location or another helicopter landing zone, while along the way bivouacking, Conducting Communications and Surveillance Operations (CCSO), and utilizing expendables. Once reaching their objective, they would be extracted either via another low-level insertion/extraction or Cross-Country Vehicle Movement (CCVM). Aircraft would use existing military operations areas and controlled airspace, as is currently done, to maneuver between Eglin AFB and the state forests.

Figure ES-3. Location Overview of Proposed Emitter Sites

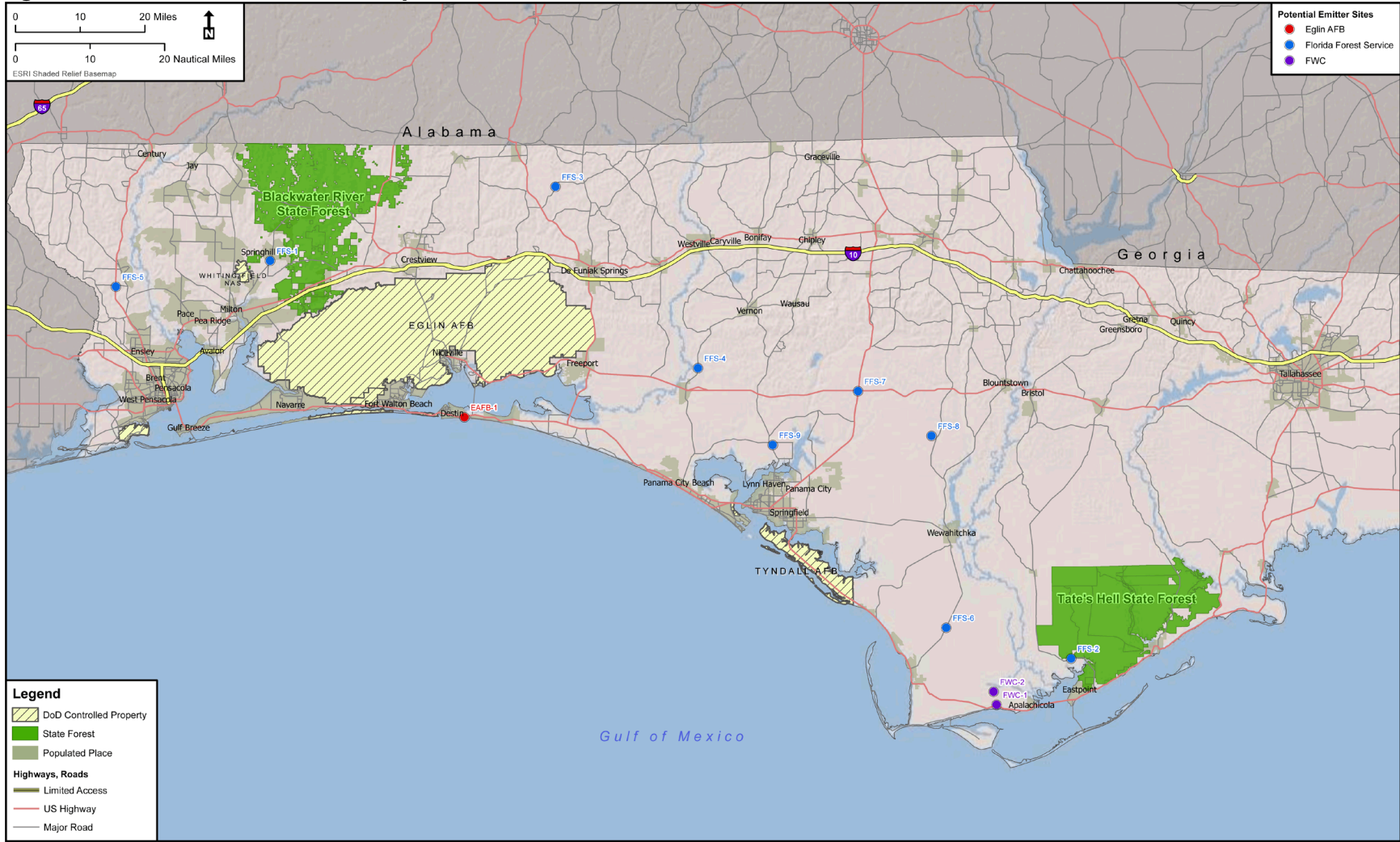


Figure ES-4. BRSF Tactical Areas

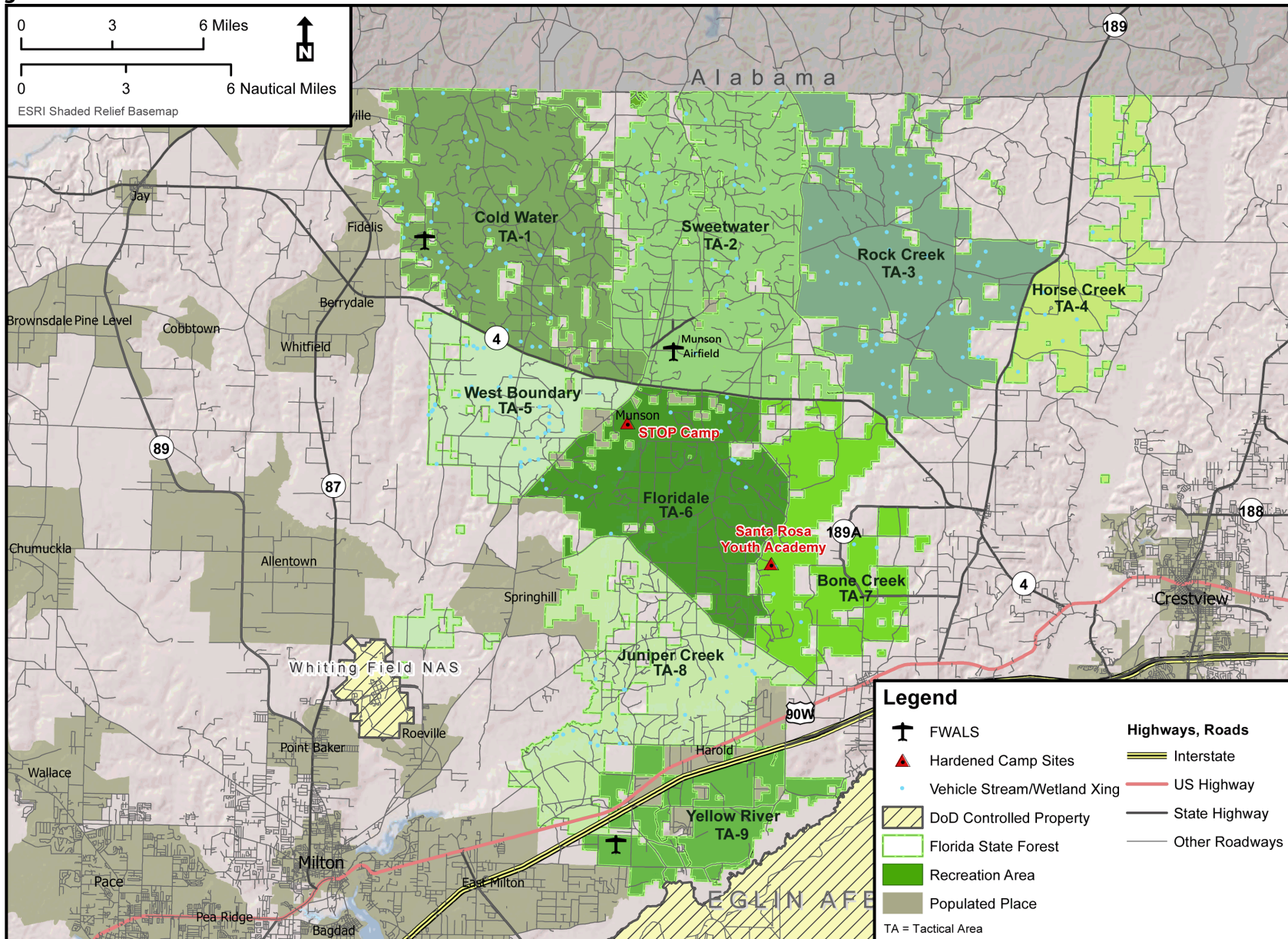
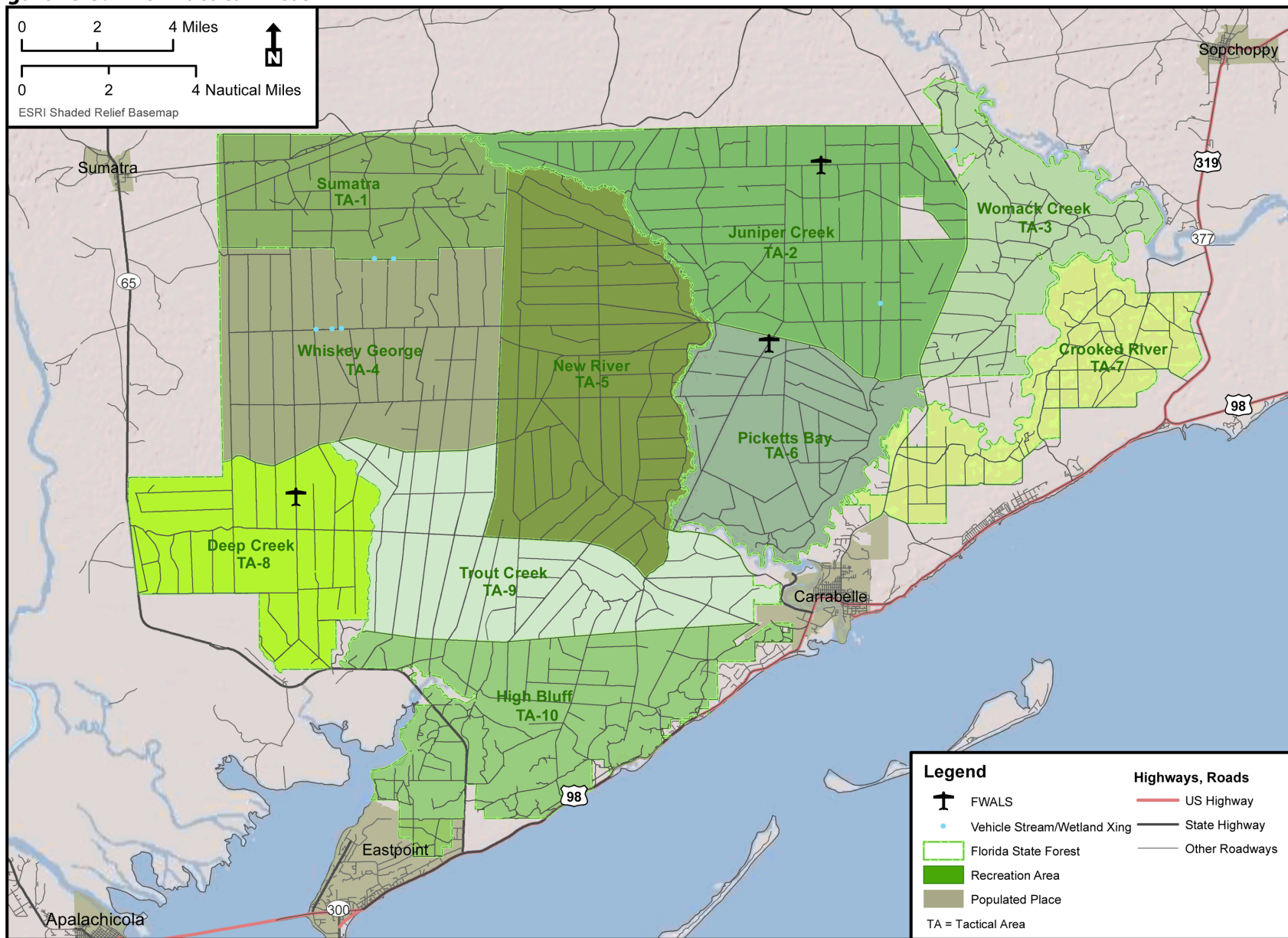


Figure ES-5. THSF Tactical Areas



### ES.4.1.2.1 Helicopter Landing Zones/Drop Zones



Typical HLZ/DZ

Existing cleared areas within the state forests would be utilized as HLZs/DZs for personnel and equipment from various aircraft (either fixed or rotary wing). Several sites located throughout the state forests may be established and utilized at any one time. These sites would be open areas that have already been cleared of tall vegetation by the FFS through regular forest management activities. Table ES-1 details HLZ/DZ activities.

Table ES-1. HLZ/DZ Details

Vehicles / Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables/ Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
Construction equipment <sup>1</sup>	Varies depending on size and location of HLZ/DZ.				Only utilize locations previously cleared by the FFS as part of regular forest activities. No land disturbance in wetlands or floodplains; no new impervious surfaces.

HLZ = Helicopter Landing Zone; DZ = Drop Zone; FFS = Florida Forest Service

1. Establishment, operations, and maintenance as part of regular FFS activities.

### ES.4.1.2.2 Fixed-Wing Aircraft Landing Sites

Fixed-Wing Aircraft Landing Sites (FWALS) involve the use of existing airstrips and dirt roadways for fixed-wing aircraft landings, takeoffs, and touchdowns in support of other training activities. At BRSF, one existing airfield would be utilized (Munson Airfield, currently designated for public use with no restrictions) and two dirt roadways (one in TA-1 and one in TA-9) are proposed for aircraft operations. At THSF, three dirt roadways are proposed in support of aircraft operations. These roadways are located in TA-2, -6, and -8. Table ES-2 details FWALS.

Table ES-2. FWALS Details

Vehicles/Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables/ Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
Construction equipment <sup>1</sup>	Varies depending on size and location of landing site.				Only utilize locations previously approved by the FFS. No land disturbance in wetlands or floodplains; no new impervious surfaces.

FWALS = Fixed-Wing Aircraft Landing Sites; FFS = Florida Forest Service

1. Establishment, operations, and maintenance as part of regular FFS activities.

### ES.4.1.2.3 Use of Expendables

Use of Expendables (UoEX) involves use of various training munitions and pyrotechnics, including simulated munitions (consisting of plastic pellets or paintballs, which produce little or no noise) and smoke grenades during training activities. At BRSF, noise-generating expendables (e.g., blanks) would only be used at hardened camp site locations. At THSF, noise-generating expendables could be used anywhere (pending results of analysis and consideration of use restrictions as identified in this EIS). Table ES-3 details UoEX activities.



**Smoke Grenade**

**Table ES-3. UoEX Details**

Expendable Type	Estimated Maximum Quantity Per Year	Estimated Average Per Event	Restrictions
5.56-millimeter blank	576,000	~10,000	During hunting season, night operations only from 2 hours after sunset to 2 hours before sunrise. Police brass/expendable waste, avoid public use areas when using blanks.  At Blackwater River State Forest, noise-generating expendable use only at hardened camp sites.
7.62-millimeter blank	196,200	~8,000	
Ground burst simulators	5,172	~2 to 5	
M-18 smoke grenades	4,038	~2 to 5	
Paintballs/plastic pellets	50,000	~5,000	
Flares	Emergency use only – not associated with training activities		

### ES.4.1.2.4 Light Aviation Proficiency Training

Light Aviation Proficiency Training (LAPT) involves use of established FWALS identified previously for fixed-wing aircraft takeoff and landing training. Table ES-4 details LAPT activities.

**Table ES-4. LAPT Details per Event**

Vehicles / Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables / Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
One aircraft per event, combination of Casa-212, PC-12, C-145	N/A	Paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades	2 hours  Day and night	5 times/day, 232 days/year (spread out among landing sites)	During hunting season, night operations only from 2 hours after sunset to 2 hours before sunrise. Avoidance of noise impacts to private landowners and inhabited recreational sites during approach and departure.

LAPT = Light Aviation Proficiency Training

#### ES.4.1.2.5 Low-Level Helicopter Insertions/Extractions

Low-Level Helicopter Insertions/Extractions (LLHI/E) involve flying helicopters near treetop level and above to an HLZ/DZ and inserting or extracting personnel. Insertion/extraction of personnel is conducted via fast rope, rappel, ladder, hoist or other means. Aircraft would fly between just above the surface to 3,000 feet above ground level (AGL). Table ES-5 details LLHI/E activities.



LLHI/E Activity

Table ES-5. LLHI/E Details per Event

Vehicles / Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables / Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
Up to four total aircraft, combination of UH-60, CH-47, MH-47  There would be no more than two CV-22s used per event.	Up to 50 inserted/extracted	Paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades  THSF only: 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs	2 hours  Day and night	2 times/month (spread out among HLZs/DZs)	During hunting season, night operations only from 2 hours after sunset to 2 hours before sunrise. Avoidance of inhabited recreational sites.

DZ = Drop Zone; GBS = ground burst simulator; HLZ = Helicopter Landing Zone; mm = millimeter; LAPT = Light Aviation Proficiency Training; LLHI/E = Low-Level Helicopter Insertions/Extractions; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest

#### ES.4.1.2.6 Temporary Combat Support Areas



TCSA Activity

Temporary Combat Support Areas (TCSAs) involve set up of logistical and medical tents and equipment around HLZs/DZs and FWALS in support of training activities. Table ES-6 details TCSA activities.

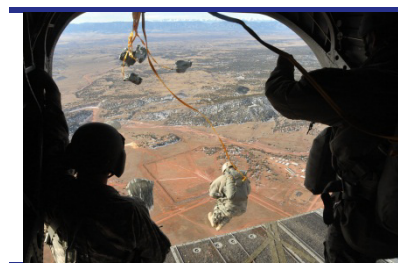
Table ES-6. TCSA Details per Event

Vehicles / Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables / Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
May arrive at location via various aircraft or land vehicles	Up to 50	Paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades, tents, generators  THSF only: 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs	24 hours  Day and night	5 times/month	During hunting season night operations only from 2 hours after sunset to 2 hours before sunrise. Avoidance of inhabited recreational sites.

GBS = ground burst simulator; mm = millimeter; TCSA = Temporary Combat Support Area; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest

### ES.4.1.2.7 Airdrops

Airdrops (ADs) involve the insertion and/or resupply of personnel via release of troops or equipment over land-based DZs or over water. This activity would be in support of training activities. Table ES-7 details AD activities.



**Static Line Personnel Drop**

**Table ES-7. Airdrop Details per Event**

Vehicles / Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables / Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
Up to four total aircraft, combination of UH-60, CH-47, C-130, C-17, C-145; CV-22  There would be no more than two CV-22s used per event.	Up to 72 depending on associated training activity and aircraft.	Land drops: approximately 15 cubic foot container of water (~300 pounds); containerized delivery system (~500 pounds); paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades  Water drops: two Zodiacs	24 hours  Day and night	4 times/day, 232days/year (spread out among HLZs/DZs)  C-17 used 2-3 times/year	During hunting season, night operations only from 2 hours after sunset to 2 hours before sunrise. Avoid inhabited recreational sites and public boaters. No power motors in Bear Lake (BRSF). Avoidance of noise impacts to private landowners and inhabited recreational sites during approach and departure.

BRSF = Blackwater River State Forest; DZ = Drop Zone; HLZ = Helicopter Landing Zone

### ES.4.1.2.8 Air/Land Vertical Lift

Air/Land Vertical Lift (A/LVL) involves the insertion and/or resupply of personnel and/or equipment via landing an aircraft directly into an HLZ or on a fixed-wing aircraft landing site. Table ES-8 details A/LVL activities.



**A/LVL Activity**

**Table ES-8. A/LVL Details per Event**

Vehicles / Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables / Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
Up to four total aircraft, combination of CV-22, UH-60, CH-47, C-130, C-145.  There would be no more than two CV-22s used per event.	Up to 72 depending on associated training activity and aircraft.	Paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades  THSF only: 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs	24 hours  Day or night	4x/day 232 days/year (spread out among HLZs/DZs/ FWALS)	During hunting season, night operations only from 2 hours after sunset to 2 hours before sunrise. Avoidance of noise impacts to private landowners and inhabited recreational sites during approach and departure.

A/LVL = Air/Land Vertical Lift; DZ = drop zone; GBS = ground burst simulator; HLZ = helicopter landing zone; mm = millimeter; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest; FWALS = Fixed-Wing Aircraft Landing Sites

### ES.4.1.2.9 Forward Air Refueling Point/Hot Gas Operations

Forward Air Refueling Point/Hot Gas Operations (FARP/HGO) involves the transfer of fuel during refueling operations from aircraft to aircraft or refueling truck to aircraft with aircraft engines running. It is not likely that this activity would occur at BRSF because it is so close to Eglin AFB. Additionally, because of the requirement within EAFBI 13-212 (Chapter 8) to only conduct this activity on hardened surfaces, and because there would be no hardened surface development at either forest, this activity would likely only occur at local airports in the vicinity of the forests. FARP/HGO activity is included in the EIS as the Air force might need to conduct this activity at BRSF under emergency circumstances. The Air Force currently conducts these activities on Eglin AFB airfields and at other airports local to THSF. Table ES-9 details FARP/HGO activities.

**Table ES-9. FARP/HGO Details per Event**

Vehicles / Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables / Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
Up to four total aircraft, combination of CV-22, UH-60, CH-47, C-130  There would be no more than two CV-22s used per event.  Fuel trucks (250 to 2,500 gallons)	4 to 8 personnel	None	24 hours  Day or night	2 times/year	May only occur on hardened surfaces (i.e., concrete or asphalt).

FARP/HGO = Forward Air Refueling Point/Hot Gas Operations

### ES.4.1.2.10 Cross-Country Dismounted Movements

CCDMs involve the movement of operators (i.e., personnel) on foot across land areas from one location to another as part of simulated assault and reconnaissance training activities. CCDM may occur on or off roads or on unimproved trails. CCDM may also include crossing of streams and wetland areas. Table ES-10 details CCDM activities.



**Table ES-10. CCDM Details per Event**

Vehicles / Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables / Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
None	Up to 72 depending on associated training activity	Paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades  THSF only: 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs	24 hours  Day or night	2 times/quarter	During hunting season, night operations only from 2 hours after sunset to 2 hours before sunrise. Avoid inhabited recreational sites.

CCDM = Cross-Country Dismounted Movement; GBS = ground burst simulator; mm = millimeter; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest

**CCDM Activity**

### ES.4.1.2.11 Cross-Country Vehicle Movement



**CCVM Activity**

CCVM involves the movement of personnel transport vehicles (ranging from high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles [HMMWVs] to 2.5-ton trucks) and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) across established roads from one location to another in support of resupply, logistics, and troop transport. CCVM would utilize established roadways and associated easements. Table ES-11 details CCVM activities.

**Table ES-11. CCVM Details per Event**

Vehicles / Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables / Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
HMMWVs, 2.5-ton trucks, motorcycles, minibikes, lightweight tactical ATVs	Up to 5/vehicle  Up to 10 vehicles	Paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades  THSF only: 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs	24 hours  Day or night	3 times/quarter	Vehicles are restricted to forest roads, designated roads only. During hunting season, night operations only from 2 hours after sunset to 2 hours before sunrise.

ATV = all-terrain vehicle; CCVM = Cross-Country Vehicle Movement; GBS = ground burst simulator; HMMWV = high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle; mm = millimeter; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest

### ES.4.1.2.12 Vehicle Stream and Wetland Crossing

Vehicle Stream and Wetland Crossing (VSWC) involves fording of intermittent and perennial streams and wetlands by military vehicles at crossing points currently established and utilized by the FFS. Table ES-12 details VSWC activities.



**VSWC Activity**

**Table ES-12. VSWC Details per Event**

Vehicles/Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables/Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
HMMWVs, 2.5-ton trucks, motorcycles, minibikes, lightweight tactical ATVs (quad runners)	Up to 5/vehicle  Up to 10 vehicles	Paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades  THSF only: 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs	24 hours  Day or night	3 times/quarter	Designated roads only at designated stream crossings.

ATV = all-terrain vehicle; GBS = ground burst simulator; HMMWV = high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle; mm = millimeter; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest; VSWC = Vehicle Stream and Wetland Crossing

### ES.4.1.2.13 Blackout Driving

Blackout Driving (BD) involves nighttime driving of ATV-type vehicles and HMMWVs without full headlights. Headlights would be diminished to “cat eyes,” which are essentially small slits placed over the headlights; this provides enough light to utilize night vision goggles while driving. Roads used for this activity would be temporarily closed (likely in concert with emplacement of obstacles) to the public to prevent safety mishaps. Table ES-13 details BD activities.

**Table ES-13. Blackout Driving Details per Event**

Vehicles/Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables / Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
Motorcycles, lightweight tactical ATVs (quad runners), HMMWVs	Up to 5/vehicle Up to 10 vehicles	None	8 hours	3 times/quarter	Only on closed/designated roads, thus no public conflict.

ATV = all-terrain vehicle; HMMWV = high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle

### ES.4.1.2.14 Emplacement of Obstacles

Emplacement of Obstacles (EoO) involves placement of concertina wire along unpaved roads and hardened camp sites. The ground surface may be slightly disturbed (within 6 inches of ground surface) from placement of stakes and pickets. All wire, stakes, and/or pickets would be recovered at completion of the training exercise. Table ES-14 details EoO activities.



**EoO Activity**

**Table ES-14. EoO Details per Event**

Vehicles / Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables / Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
N/A	N/A	Concertina wire and barbed wire Stakes/pickets	Length of associated training exercise Day or night	10 times/year	Removal of all obstacles after exercise. During hunting season, night operations only from 2 hours after sunset to 2 hours before sunrise.

EoO = Emplacement of Obstacles

### ES.4.1.2.15 Bivouacking/Assembly Areas



**B/AA Activity**

8

Bivouacking/Assembly Areas (B/AA) involve the use of an area, mainly tented, where troops eat and rest overnight in support of training activities. There may be slight surface ground disturbance (within 6 inches of ground surface) from placement of tent stakes and pickets. All expendables/equipment would be recovered prior to leaving the site. Table ES-15 details B/AA activities.

**Table ES-15. B/AA Details per Event**

Vehicles/Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables/Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
Three ATVs and trailers to haul equipment	Up to 72 depending on associated mission activity.	Tents and other supplies.  Stakes/pickets	Length of associated training exercise.  Day or night	10 times/year	During hunting season, night operations only from 2 hours after sunset to 2 hours before sunrise.

ATV = all-terrain vehicle; B/AA = Bivouacking/Assembly Areas

### ES.4.1.2.16 Communications and Surveillance Operations

Communications and Surveillance Operations (C&SO) involve the use of sites to coordinate communications and/or conduct surveillance of “enemy forces” in support of training activities. The ground surface may be slightly disturbed from placement of tent stakes and pickets. Table ES-16 details C&SO activities.

**Table ES-16. C&SO Details per Event**

Vehicles / Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables / Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
HMMWVs, rental vehicles (trucks), ATVs, and trailers to haul equipment	Up to 72 depending on associated mission activity.	Communication equipment, radio antennas, tents, radar equipment, camouflage nets, generators	Length of associated training exercise  Day or night	Monthly	During hunting season, night operations only from 2 hours after sunset to 2 hours before sunrise. Avoidance of inhabited recreational sites.

ATV = all-terrain vehicle; C&SO = Communications and Surveillance Operations; HMMWV = high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle

### ES.4.1.2.17 Amphibious Operations

Amphibious operations involve boat operations on the water, loading/unloading of personnel to and from boats, and movement in streams, rivers, and lakes as part of egress/ingress operations. Table ES-17 details amphibious operations activities.



**Amphibious Operations**

**Table ES-17. Amphibious Operations Details per Event**

Vehicles / Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables / Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
Up to six various inflatable and rigid powered watercraft per event; engines 35 to 200 hp. Watercraft may consist of Zodiacs and aluminum boats up to 28 feet with or without outboard motors.	Up to 6/watercraft	Paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades  THSF only: 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs	12 hours  Day and night	10 times/year	Avoid inhabited recreational sites and public boaters. No power motors in Bear Lake (BRSF).

BRSF = Blackwater River State Forest; hp = horsepower; mm = millimeter; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest

### ES.4.1.2.18 Natural Resource Consumption

Natural Resource Consumption (NRC) involves the procurement of natural food sources, such as small game and rodents (utilizing survival techniques such as trapping/snaring) and eating of vegetation. Locations of avoidance areas (e.g., sensitive habitat areas and species) would be communicated to participants prior to implementation of the activity. Table ES-18 details NRC activities.

**Table ES-18. NRC Details per Event**

Vehicles / Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables / Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
N/A	20 (10 teams at 2/team)	Paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades  THSF only: 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs	7 days  Day and night	2 times/quarter	Avoid protected wildlife and plants.

GBS = ground burst simulator; mm = millimeter; NRC = Natural Resource Consumption; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest

### ES.4.1.2.19 Overwater Hoist Operations

Overwater Hoist Operations (OHO) involve hoist rescue and recovery of personnel and watercraft over water. Aircraft would conduct operations from just above the surface of the water to a height of about 150 feet. Aircraft would hover about 10 feet over the surface for drops and about 80 feet above the surface for retrievals. Table ES-19 details OHO activities.



OHO Activity

Table ES-19. OHO Details per Event

Vehicles / Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables / Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
<b>Watercraft (see Table )</b>  <b>Four total aircraft, combination of CV-22, HH-60, CH-47</b>  <b>There would be no more than 2 CV-22s used per event.</b>	Up to 6/watercraft, including one safety swimmer, coxswain, medic, and assistant coxswain	Paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades  THSF only: 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs	4 to 6 hours  Day and night	1/month	No power motors in Bear Lake (BRSF). Avoid fishermen and boaters.

BRSF = Blackwater River State Forest; GBS = ground burst simulator; mm = millimeter; OHO = Overwater Hoist Operations; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest

### ES.4.1.2.20 Opposing Forces Vehicle Operations

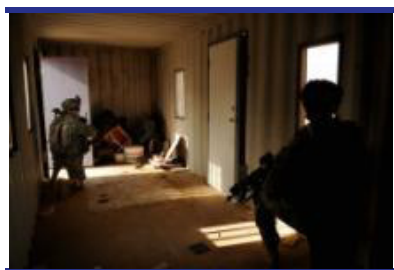
During Opposing Forces Vehicle Operations (OFVO), two teams (one "Red," the other "Blue") compete to locate each other on established roads in a simulated urban environment. Personnel may exit vehicles to conduct "search activities." Aircraft may be used as a "spotter" to direct one of the teams; the aircraft would fly at between 16,000 and 23,000 feet AGL. Table ES-20 details OFVO activities.

Table ES-20. OFVO Details per Event

Vehicles / Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables / Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
<b>HMMWV</b>  <b>Cessna 172 aircraft</b>	Up to 5/vehicle  Up to 10 vehicles	M-18 smoke grenades  THSF only: 5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs	Day and night	5 times/week	Vehicles are restricted to forest roads, designated roads only. During hunting season, night operations only from 2 hours after sunset to 2 hours before sunrise. Avoid inhabited recreational sites.

GBS = ground burst simulator; HMMWV = high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle; mm = millimeter; OFVO = Opposing Forces Vehicle Operations; THSF = Tate's Hell State Forest

## ES.4.1.2.21 Hardened Camp Site Use



Urban Combat Training

Hardened Camp Site Use (HCSU) involves use of two hardened camp facilities located at BRSF. Both camps were established by the Florida State Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ); one is identified as the Short-Term Offender Program (STOP) Camp, the other is the Santa Rosa Youth Academy. The STOP Camp was leased by the DJJ from FFS and returned after the program was shut down. These sites consist of buildings and infrastructure, such as utilities and roadways, and may be used as insertion/extraction points, HLZs/DZs, command and control centers, training areas for combat in urban environment training, or other training activity support. Table ES-21 details HCSU activities.

Table ES-21. HCSU Details per Event (BRSF)

Vehicles / Aircraft	# Personnel	Expendables / Equipment	Duration	Frequency	Restrictions
<b>Aircraft:</b> <b>CV-22, HH-60, CH-47</b>  <b>There would be no more than two CV-22s used per event.</b>  <b>Vehicles: ATV-types, HMMWVs</b>	Up to 50	5.56-mm blanks, 7.62-mm blanks, GBSs, paintballs/plastic pellets, M-18 smoke grenades; simunitions	24 hours  Day and night	5 times/week 232 days/year	Upkeep and maintenance of facility.

ATV = all-terrain vehicle; BRSF = Blackwater River State Forest; HCSU = Hardened Camp Site Use; HMMWV = high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle; mm = millimeter

## ES.4.2 Operational Constraints

Section 2.5 of the EIS outlines more than 100 operational constraints associated with the Proposed Action. The operational constraints are components of the Proposed Action and would be implemented as part of the GLI proposal. The constraints serve to minimize or alleviate adverse impacts to the human and natural environment.

In order to ensure that all General Operational Constraints are identified and adhered to by training units, Eglin AFB's environmental management program has developed "Protection Levels" for areas on the Eglin Range that are utilized for ground training activities. These levels are based on General Operational Constraints and are integral to environmental resource protection. Under the Proposed Action, the Air Force would utilize a similar system tailored for BRSF and THSF; protection levels for the Proposed Action for both ground operations and noise are described in Tables ES-22 and ES-23, respectively, and are applicable to all training locations within the boundaries of the state forests. Activity outside the boundaries of the state forests is limited to use of public roadways for transportation.

1 **Table ES-22. General Protection Levels for Proposed Action Ground Operations**

Protection Level	Restrictions	Area Covered
<b>Prohibited</b>	No access is permitted.	Camp/recreational sites, any cultural resource “prohibited areas,” piping plover critical habitat (THSF).
<b>Restricted</b>	All activities must remain on roadbeds of established roads, including troop movements, vehicle operations, digging, and any type of ground surface disturbance. No refueling of vehicles or aircraft allowed.	1,500 feet around flatwoods salamander habitat; apiaries; sensitive species point locations and associated FNAI sensitive habitats: pitcher plant bogs, rare plants, rare animals, invasive species.
<b>RCW Buffer</b>	Follow <i>Management Guidelines for the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker on Army Installations</i> (U.S. Army, 2007) and <i>Eglin AFB Red-Cockaded Woodpecker Programmatic Biological Opinion</i> (U.S. Air Force, 2013), Table 4-2.	200-foot buffer around RCW cavity trees for ground operations.
<b>Bald Eagle Nest Buffer</b>	During nesting season (October 1 to May 15), follow <i>National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines</i> (USFWS, 2007)	1,000-foot buffer around nest for aircraft operations; 330-foot buffer for ground training operations. Currently there are no GIS data for eagle nests at either forest. However, should a nest be identified, these protections would be applied.
<b>Wood Stork Habitat Buffer</b>	Follow <i>Habitat Management Guidelines for the Wood Stork in the Southeast Region</i> (USFWS, 1990).	500-foot buffer around wood stork feeding/roosting habitat. Currently there are no GIS data for habitat at either forest. However, should habitat be identified these protections would be applied.
<b>Limited Use-1 (LU-1)</b>	<u>Approved Activities:</u> use of star cluster pyrotechnics (hand-held slap flares) only for emergency purposes; use of nonlethal small arms ammunition such as blanks and paintballs (at BRSF approved for paintballs only); see GLI Noise Protection Levels Map for further restrictions on noise-generating expendables. Dismounted maneuver and incidental and consumptive land disturbance. <u>Not Approved:</u> use of smokes, flares, or simulators; off-road vehicle use – all vehicles must remain on established roads; land development and point land disturbance outside of previously disturbed roadbeds and road shoulders. LZ/DZ use except on approved FFS sites not requiring additional land development; see Noise Protection Levels Map for further restrictions on LZ/DZ use. No refueling of vehicles or aircraft allowed.	100 feet around wetlands, water bodies and floodplains; areas exhibiting very limiting soil characteristics (e.g., susceptible to erosion) for HLZ and/or bivouacking; cultural resource areas with inadequate surveys and/or “not cleared” areas; Tate’s Hell Camp Gordon Johnson Historic District.
<b>Limited Use-2 (LU-2)</b>	<u>Approved Activities:</u> use of pyrotechnics (e.g., smoke grenades and GBSs) and nonlethal small arms ammunition such as blanks and paintballs (at BRSF approved for smoke grenades and paintballs only, with GBSs permitted only at hardened camp sites); see GLI Noise Protection Levels Map for further restrictions on noise-generating expendables. Dismounted maneuver. Incidental, point, and consumptive land disturbance (includes catholes) outside of previously disturbed roadbeds and road shoulders if approved by FFS. LZ/DZ use only on approved FFS sites with FFS coordination required for any additional land disturbance; see Noise Protection Levels Map for further restrictions on LZ/DZ use. Refueling of vehicles or aircraft allowed only on asphalt or concrete surfaces. <u>Not Approved:</u> off-road vehicle use – all vehicles must remain on established roads.	All areas not covered by other protection levels.

BRSF = Blackwater River State Forest; DZ = drop zone; FFS = Florida Forest Service; FNAI = Florida Natural Areas Inventory; GBS = ground burst simulator; GLI = Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI) Landscape Initiative; HLZ = helicopter landing zone; LU-1 = Limited Use-1; LU-2 = Limited Use-2; LZ = landing zone; RCW = red-cockaded woodpecker; THSF = Tate’s Hell State Forest

**Table ES-23. Noise Protection Levels for Proposed Action Operations**

Vehicles / Aircraft	Restrictions	Area Covered
Not Approved for HLZs/DZs	No HLZs or DZs permitted.	2,200-foot buffer around camp sites/recreational sites and in/out parcels with residential structures.
RCW Air Operations Buffer	No aircraft operations permitted.	500-foot buffer around RCW trees.
Not Approved for Overflights below 500 feet AGL	No overflights below 500 feet AGL	200-foot buffer around camp sites/recreational sites and in/out parcels with residential structures.
Not Approved for Noise Generating Expendables	No noise generating expendable use allowed; includes blanks and GBSs.	4,000-foot buffer around camp sites/recreational sites and in/out parcels with residential structures.

AGL = above ground level; DZ = drop zone; HLZ = helicopter landing zone; RCW = red-cockaded woodpecker

As stated previously, General Operational Constraints are inherent to the Proposed Action, in that they are considered components of the Proposed Action's implementation. As an example, a 200-foot activity buffer around identified red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) cavity trees is a requirement of EAFBI 13-212. Just as CCDM at BRSF and THSF is a component of the Proposed Action, so too is the requirement to maintain a 200-foot activity buffer around RCW trees at either BRSF or THSF, since EAFBI 13-212 would be a component of the Proposed Action. Impact analysis in this EIS considers these requirements as part of the initial impact assessment. Thus, analysis of impacts to the RCW considers the implementation of the 200-foot activity buffer in the initial impact assessment; if potentially adverse impacts are identified, then Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations were developed to minimize or avoid this potential.

### ES.4.3 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the training activities identified under the Proposed Action would continue to occur on Eglin AFB as described and assessed in the *Interstitial Area Range Final Environmental Assessment Revision 2* and *Eglin AFB Riverine/Estuarine Environmental Assessment*. BRSF and THSF would not be utilized, and no new emitter sites would be used.

The No Action Alternative would not meet the purpose and need for the Proposed Action, in that there would be continued stress on the Eglin AFB user environment due to conflicts with hazardous and nonhazardous training activities. As use of the Eglin Range increases, these conflicts would become more frequent and problematic. Activities at BRSF, THSF, and the various proposed emitter sites would continue as described in the respective state forest management plans.

## ES.5. ALTERNATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The following provides an impact summary of the analyses presented in the Draft EIS Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6. Details on each specific action and the potential impacts as related to the respective location can be found in these chapters. The significance of impacts was determined by evaluating the context, intensity, and duration of the action (40 CFR 1508.27) and the relative effect on individual resources; context, intensity, and duration factors used in the analyses are described in each respective Chapter 3 resource area discussion. The impact

analyses considers direct, indirect and cumulative impacts on resource along with how both beneficial and adverse impacts affect public safety, the characteristics of the geographic area and proximity of the Proposed Action to sensitive resources, the potential controversial nature of the potential impact, whether possible effects are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks, whether the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects, cumulative impacts, impacts to cultural resources or endangered species, and whether the Proposed Action threatens to violate Federal, State, or local laws or environmental protection requirements. Each of these aspects are addressed as appropriate in the applicable resource area sections and chapters in this EIS.. General criteria for impacts to resource/issue areas are summarized below and are presented relative to individual resource/issue areas at each proposed location in Table ES-24:

- **Beneficial** – Beneficial impacts may occur under any context, intensity, or duration. These generally result in some benefit or overall improvement to the resource impacted by the action. Such impacts may include a reduction in air emissions or restoration of habitats; the scope of the impact directly related to the context, intensity and duration of the impact. Elimination of baseline air emissions, or restoration of large areas of disturbed wetland may be considered significant beneficial impacts, while a small reduction in baseline air emissions or restoration of a small pocket of wetlands may be considered beneficial but relatively insignificant. Other than providing benefits to Air Force training capabilities, the Air Force has not identified any significant or insignificant beneficial impacts under the Proposed Action.
- **Adverse** – Adverse impacts generally result in detriment or degradation of the impacted resource, the degree or level of impact directly related to the context, intensity, and duration of the impact. The Air Force has identified the potential for adverse impacts for several resource areas; resources experiencing potential adverse impacts are shaded yellow in Table ES-24. Adverse impacts can either be significant or insignificant.
  - **Significant** – Physical aspects are easily perceptible, and typically endure over the medium-to-long term, with a regional context and a high intensity; however, significant impacts can occur potentially over the short term under any context given a high intensity. Significant adverse impacts are typically not recoverable over the short term, and require long term recovery processes with extensive mitigation or revision of Proposed Action to avoid or minimize impacts. An example of a significant adverse impact would be destruction of large percentages of wetland areas or degradation of water quality that may affect human health and the environment.
  - **Insignificant** – These impacts are typically short- to medium-term impacts under any context or intensity. Beneficial impacts that are not significant in nature may include restoration of small pockets of wetlands. Adverse but not significant impacts are typically recoverable over the short-to-medium term with mitigations required to minimize level of impact or potential for impact, the extent of mitigation dependent on the identified context and intensity of

the impact. Examples of adverse impacts that are not significant may be short, intermittent increases in noise to transient recreational users that do not affect overall usability of the forest, or the potential for localized, intermittent soil erosion on stream banks due to troop movement over the land-water interface during dismounted movements and amphibious operations. These are recoverable impacts over the short-term through Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations to avoid noise sensitive areas for training in the case of noise impacts, and for soil impacts minimizing the size of troop units conducting ground training activities, rotating land-water interface ingress/egress points, and not using ingress/egress points that show signs of erosion.

- **Neutral or No Effect** – These are impacts that are typically of a low-intensity, such that they are imperceptible regardless of context or duration. Such impacts, whether beneficial or otherwise, are recoverable over the short term without mitigation and result in no overall perceptible change to the resource. Resources experiencing neutral or no effects are identified as “green” in Table ES-24.

Impacts were evaluated with consideration of implementation of General Operational Constraints inherent to the Proposed Action associated with EAFBI operational procedures and other NEPA-related documents for similar actions occurring on the Eglin Range on similar resources. General Operational Constraints are a prerequisite for implementing the Proposed Action. Once analyses were completed, additional Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations were identified to avoid or minimize adverse impacts to relatively impacted resources.

Overall, the Air Force has not identified any significant beneficial or adverse impacts associated with the Proposed Action. While the Air Force has identified the potential for adverse impacts to various resources, these impacts would be insignificant based on the context, intensity and duration of the identified impacts as described throughout Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6. Impacts to public health and safety would be either avoided or minimized through implementation of operational constraints and mitigations. Any unique geographic characteristics (e.g., sensitive habitats, areas prone to erosion, etc.) associated with the proposed emitter or training sites would be avoided, and any potential adverse impacts to the quality of the human environment would be minimal (mainly the potential for occasional annoyance to recreational users from noise). There are no unknown risks or impacts that may be considered controversial in nature associated with emitter site use or training activities (such actions have been extensively analyzed in this EIS and other Air Force documents as referenced in this EIS), and the Proposed Action is not precedent setting because the DoD utilizes public lands throughout the United States for both emitter sites and military training. Adverse impacts to cultural resources and endangered species have been identified; however, these impacts would also be minimized/mitigated through implementation of operational constraints and mitigations as identified through consultation under the National Historic Preservation Act and the Endangered Species Act, respectively. Additionally, the use of emitter sites and conduct of training activities would comply with all Federal, State, and local laws. Finally, the Air Force has not identified any significant potential for cumulative impacts (as discussed in Chapter 7). Therefore, based on the context, intensity, and duration of impacts identified in this EIS the Air Force has not identified significant beneficial or adverse impacts under the Proposed Action.

More detail on impacts can be found in the respective resource-specific discussions provided in the associated EIS sections identified in Table ES-24.

**Table ES-24. Summary of Impacts and Associated Location in EIS**

	Proposed Action			No Action
	Emitter Sites	Blackwater River State Forest	Tate's Hell State Forest	
Airspace	Sections 3.2/4.2	Sections 3.2/5.2	Sections 3.2/6.2	Chapter 8
Noise	Sections 3.3/4.3	Sections 3.3/5.3	Sections 3.3/6.3	
Safety	Sections 3.4/4.4	Sections 3.4/5.4	Sections 3.4/6.4	
Air Quality	Sections 3.5/4.5	Sections 3.5/5.5	Sections 3.5/6.5	
Earth Resources	Sections 3.6/4.6	Sections 3.6/5.6	Sections 3.6/6.6	
Water Resources	Sections 3.7/4.7	Sections 3.7/5.7	Sections 3.7/6.7	
Biological Resources	Sections 3.8/4.8	Sections 3.8/5.8	Sections 3.8/6.8	
Cultural Resources	Sections 3.9/4.9	Sections 3.9/5.9	Sections 3.9/6.9	
Land Use	Sections 3.10/4.10	Sections 3.10/5.10	Sections 3.10/6.10	
Socioeconomics/ Environmental Justice	Sections 3.11/4.11	Sections 3.11/5.11	Sections 3.11/6.11	
Hazardous & Solid Materials/Waste	Sections 3.12/4.12	Sections 3.12/5.12	Sections 3.12/6.12	
Infrastructure/ Transportation	Sections 3.13/4.13	Sections 3.13/5.13	Sections 3.13/6.13	

The Air Force completed consultation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) on April 8, 2014 and has received concurrence on a finding of Not Likely to Adversely Affect sensitive species or habitat (USFWS, 2014). The Air Force has notified the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), and Native American tribes in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). A list of agencies and tribes contacted is provided in the Draft EIS Appendix B, *Public and Agency Involvement*, while ESA and NHPA consultation documentation is provided in the Draft EIS Appendix C, *Consultation Documentation*. All completed NHPA consultation documents, including responses and findings from cultural resource consultation agencies, will be provided in the Final EIS.

## **ES.6. NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS**

Implementation of the No Action Alternative means that none of the Proposed Action components as described in Sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 would occur at the respective locations (emitter sites, BRSF, and THSF). All activities would remain on Eglin AFB, and no new emitter sites would be established. There would be no impacts to the proposed emitter sites, BRSF, or THSF beyond those resulting from normal activities at these locations, such as recreational use and typical forest management activities conducted by the FFS as identified in the respective state forest management plans. Evaluation of the impacts of these activities on the affected environment is beyond the scope of this EIS.

Impacts to the Eglin Range and associated airspace would be as described in the *Eglin AFB Final Interstitial Range Environmental Assessment Revision 2* (U.S. Air Force, 2013c), the *Eglin AFB Riverine/Estuarine Final Programmatic Environmental Assessment* (U.S. Air Force, 2004), and the *Eglin AFB Final Overland Air Operations Programmatic Environmental Assessment* (U.S. Air Force, 2006).

## **ES.7. PROPOSED RESOURCE-SPECIFIC MITIGATIONS**

Based on the scope of activities associated with the Proposed Action, the inherent General Operational Constraints identified in Section 2.5 of the EIS, and related impact analyses detailed in the EIS, there are no identified Resource-Specific Mitigation impact minimization procedures necessary for the following resource areas: air quality, solid/hazardous materials and waste, and infrastructure and transportation.

Impact analysis of the Proposed Action has identified Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations that would be implemented, in addition to General Operational Constraints in EIS Section 2.5, to further minimize or avoid adverse impacts for the following resources: airspace management, noise, earth resources, water resources, biological resources, safety, and land use. These Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations are detailed in Section 2.7 of the EIS. In most cases impacts would be minimized such that impact significance levels would be reduced from “adverse” (yellow) to “neutral” or “no effect” (green) in Table ES-24.

## **ES.8. CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

Cumulative effects analysis considers the potential environmental impacts resulting from “the incremental impacts of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions” (40 CFR 1508.7). In this EIS, the Air Force has made an effort to identify actions on or near the action areas associated with the Proposed Action that are under consideration and in the planning stage at this time.

The Air Force evaluated the potential for significant cumulative impacts associated with the Proposed Action. No unmitigatable adverse impacts have been identified for use of emitter sites, thus the Air Force has not identified any correlating potential for cumulative impacts from emitter site use. Although the Proposed Action would result in incremental impacts when associated with identified past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions at BRSF and THSF, the Air Force does not expect the Proposed Action to result in any significant adverse cumulative impacts.

## **ES.9. OTHER NEPA CONSIDERATIONS**

### **ES.9.1 Relationship Between Short-term Use and Long-term Productivity**

#### ***Short-Term Uses***

The Proposed Action would have minor short-term effects related to use of resources during land improvements in support of FWALS and HLZs, consumptive use, traveling, use of produced materials, fuels, etc. As a mitigating component of short-term uses of the

environment, the Proposed Action would create economic benefits during training activities in the form of some jobs and the direct and indirect demand for goods and services.

### **Long-Term Productivity**

Based on analysis of the Proposed Action, the Air Force has not identified any long-term adverse impacts to productivity as a result of unmitigated short-term impacts. The Proposed Action would result in short-term increases in direct and indirect demand for goods and services while training activities occur. Impacts would be intermittent over the long term as the GLI program is established and implemented. Long-term benefits to the FFS associated with lease fees would be realized through leasing agreements.

### **Short-Term Uses Versus Long-Term Productivity**

The assessment of effects on long-term productivity is related to whether the project is consistent with long-term regional and local planning objectives. Under the Proposed Action, there would be minor increases in employment, income, and net fiscal benefits and revenues to the FFS and surrounding communities during training activities. Training activities at the state forests would be scheduled to avoid conflict with hunters and other recreational users, thus avoiding impacts to long-term productivity associated with recreational use of the forests.

## **ES.9.2 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources**

NEPA requires that environmental analysis identify any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources involved in the implementation of the Proposed Action or alternatives. Irreversible and irretrievable resource commitments are related to the use of nonrenewable resources and the effects that the use of these resources could have on future generations. Irreversible effects primarily result from the use or destruction of a specific resource (e.g., energy and minerals) that cannot be replaced within a reasonable time frame. Irretrievable resource commitments involve the loss in value of an affected resource that cannot be restored as a result of the action (e.g., extinction of a threatened or endangered species or the disturbance of a cultural site).

Implementing the Proposed Action would require a commitment of natural, physical, human, and fiscal resources. In all of these categories, irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources would occur in the form of utilization of energy resources such as fossil fuels (for transportation, associated with utility use, etc.). While none of the proposed activities involve direct habitat alteration, some biological resources would be directly lost as a result of consumptive use during training activities; however, no sensitive species would be impacted, and the amount of general wildlife species taken would be insignificant when compared with the amount of hunting taking place at each proposed location. Incidental contact (such as a vehicle strike) may also result in incidental mortality to some species; while this cannot be completely avoided, the potential can be minimized by implementation of the General Operational Constraints and Proposed Resource-Specific Mitigations identified in the EIS.

## **ES.9.3 Energy Requirements and Conservation Potential of Alternatives and Mitigation Measures**

Energy requirements associated with the Proposed Action are limited to use of fossil fuels in support of transportation and utility use. Conservation potential for this resource is limited to

1 general energy conservation techniques, such as making sure no lights remain on at  
2 hardened camp sites, transportation pooling, etc.

#### 3 **ES.9.4 Natural or Depletable Resource Requirements and Conservation Potential**

4 While use of natural resources as a component of the training environment would occur at  
5 each forest (e.g., consumption training), use of natural resources for the Proposed Action is  
6 expected to be “nonintrusive,” in the sense that the goal of the Air Force in implementing the  
7 Proposed Action is to avoid to the greatest extent possible adverse impacts to natural and  
8 anthropogenic resources and to be compatible with FFS forest management plans. To this  
9 end, the Air Force has developed General Operational Constraints and Proposed Resource-  
10 Specific Mitigations to avoid or minimize impacts on the environment. Consequently, the Air  
11 Force would support conservation measures of the FFS through implementation of these  
12 requirements. Other than use of fossil fuels as discussed previously, there are no requirements  
13 for depletable resources associated with the Proposed Action.



# GRASI

Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative



Eglin Air Force Base, Florida

## How to Make Your Comments Count

Commenting on public policy issues or documents as a private citizen can be daunting, especially if the issues are technical. The most effective comments are those that provide useful information. Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) are used to improve the document and analyses, and to provide decision-makers with relevant information about how the proposed and alternative actions are expected to affect the environment and the public. The more clear, concise, and relevant to the Draft EIS your comments are, the more effective they will be and the more likely it is that they will be utilized to improve the final document and affect agency decisions. Consider the suggestions below to make it easier and more effective to participate.

### ***Make your comments as specific as possible, backing up statements with explanations, facts, and references as appropriate.***

- Establish your authority to comment, whether it is as a concerned citizen, representative of an interest group, or an expert.
- Be as specific as possible with your comments and refer to page numbers and paragraphs in the Draft EIS. If you are recommending changes to the Draft EIS, suggest specific language when possible.
- Support statements with details. If, for example, you feel a species was not sufficiently analyzed, focus on the particular problem or issue. Avoid broad statements such as "the document did not adequately analyze the impacts to biological resources."
- Read all relevant portions of the document for your concerns because the potential impacts to resources are likely to be described in more than one section. For example, a change in aircraft sound levels may affect wildlife, sensitive species, land use, aircraft operations, socioeconomics or have environmental justice consequences. These impacts may be described within different sections of a chapter. If you only read one section, you will miss the full impact analysis.

### ***If you are presenting your comments verbally, consider these format and style suggestions:***

- Start by offering general or summary comments.
- Use topic sentences and short sentences.
- Avoid asking questions. Instead, pose your questions as comments to be considered.
- Be respectful of your fellow commentors and agency representatives.

### ***Finally, understand comment deadlines and processes.***

Comments may be submitted at any time throughout the environmental impact analysis process. For your comments to be considered and responded to in the Final EIS, please submit them by **June 23, 2014**.

### **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) - A Disclosure Process Substantive Comments Make a Difference**

The preparation of a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document does not determine which alternative to choose. It does not prevent environmental impacts from happening or guarantee the final decisions will be appreciated by anyone. It does not prohibit any actions. Simply stated, NEPA is an information disclosure process.

Therefore, non-substantive comments that express opinions or that are pointed, accusatory, or personal will receive reduced or no attention and will not be responded to by the Air Force. However, substantive comments will be responded to in the Final EIS.

Substantive comments:

- Question, with fact-based reasons, the accuracy of information in the EIS
- Question, with fact-based reasons, the adequacy of, methodology for, or assumptions used for the environmental analysis
- Present new information relevant to the analysis
- Present reasonable alternatives other than those analyzed in the EIS that meet the purpose and need statement of the EIS
- Cause changes or revisions in one or more of the alternatives
- Note where clarifications should be made in the EIS.

### ***Stay updated.***

If you would like to receive information about the EIS and public hearings or meetings, please ask to be included on the EIS mailing list. Contact:

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